



Nebraska Department of Natural Resources
Floodplain Management Section
<http://dnr.ne.gov/floodplain/floodplain.html>

First Nebraska State-wide Floodplain Conference Exceeded Expectations, Is Deemed a Success

By Gloria Bucco
Public Information Officer

One hundred and two people representing 39 counties and 49 communities attended the state's first Conference for Floodplain Managers on July 31, at the State Office Building in Lincoln. The Conference was sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and the Nebraska Floodplain and Stormwater Manager's Association. Of the 102 attendees, 46 were Floodplain Managers, and the remaining 56 were consultants and other community officials. One consultant traveled from Kansas City, Mo.

After a Breakfast Buffet catered by HyVee, attendees were welcomed by Brian Dunnigan, director of NDNR, and Laurie Carrette-Zook, NeFSMA chair. Six seminars were offered including:

- FEMA Elevation Certificate Workshop
- Structural and Non-structural Options for Reducing Flood Losses
- Emergency Management for Floodplain Managers
- Floodplain Management 101
- Hydrology and Hydraulics for the Non-engineer
- Flood Insurance Basics and the NFIP

MORE PHOTOS INSIDE!

Featured speakers were Dean Ownby, an Insurance Program Specialist with FEMA Region VII; Steve McMaster, NDNR Natural Resources Planner Coordinator; Cindy Newsham, Response and Recovery Division Manager with the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency; Bill Jones, NDNR Floodplain

Management Specialist ; and Shuhai Zheng, NDNR Floodplain Management Section Chief.



Conference attendees listen as Nicole Fleck-Tooze, Public Works Special Project Administrator, City of Lincoln, gives her Keynote presentation.

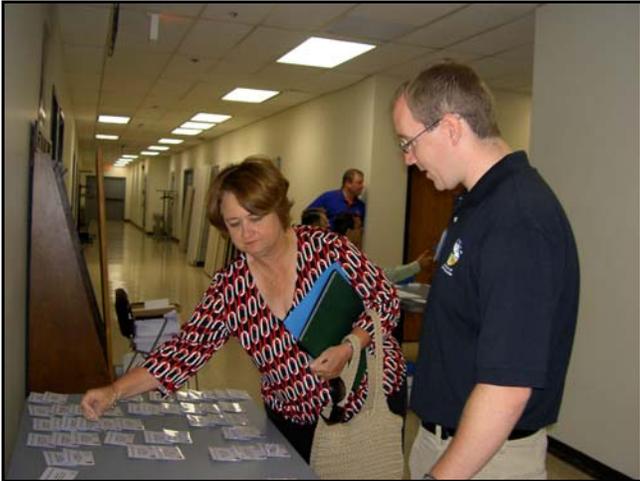
During the luncheon, catered by Valentino's, attendees heard a Keynote Presentation by Nicole Fleck-Tooze, Public Works Special Project Administrator in Watershed Management for the City of Lincoln.

Janet Johnson, Chadron Floodplain Manager, Becky Paulsen, Dawes County Floodplain Manager, and William Zung, a consultant from Kansas City, Mo., were recognized for traveling the farthest.

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Joyce Oakley, Nemaha County Floodplain Manager, and Mark Stursma, City of Papillion Floodplain Manager, won the door prizes provided by NeFSMA.



NDNR's Andrew Christenson helps LeAnn Klein, Buffalo County Floodplain Manager, locate her name badge.

A careful review of all Evaluation Forms turned in revealed many ideas and suggestions for future conferences. The most common criticism was the lack of a break in the 1.5-hour and 2-hour seminars. Please be assured that this will be remedied in the future.



NeFSMA's Jesse Poore accepts the registration fee from Jim Litchfield, Floodplain Manager.

One final note: There was a great deal of food left over from the luncheon. NDNR called Lincoln's People's City Mission which sent a driver over immediately to pick up 13 untouched pizzas plus lasagna, salad and breadsticks. The Mission was very happy to receive the donation.



Conference attendees help themselves to the Breakfast Buffet catered by HyVee.



Stephanie Rathburn, Project Engineer (L) and Alexa Muhs, Watershed Management Intern, enjoy breakfast at the start of the Floodplain Conference.



Dean Ownby, FEMA Region VII Insurance Program Specialist, emphasizes a point during his morning seminar.



Photos and Captions by Gloria Bucco

A packed crowd listens to a conference presentation.



NDNR's Bill Jones, Floodplain Management Specialist, answers a question for an attendee.



(From left) Ed Kouma, Engineer for Watershed Management, Jennifer Thompson, Civil Engineer, and Ben Higgins, Senior Engineer for Watershed Management, enjoy the luncheon catered by Valentino's.



Steve McMaster, NDNR Natural Resources Planner Coordinator, explains a complex issue at his well-attended seminar.



NeFSMA's Laurie Carrette-Zook talks to conference attendees Mike Burns, City of Valley Floodplain Manager (L), and Doug Swanson, Floodplain Manager, during lunch.



Becky Paulsen (center), Dawes County Floodplain Manager, was one of three attendees who traveled the farthest to attend the conference.



Conference attendees Dan Fricke, Project Engineer (L), and Devin Biesecker, Engineer for Watershed Management, chat during a break.



NDNR's Floodplain Chief Shuhai Zheng chats

On The Waterfront: *Nebraska Mapping Outlook*

Shuhai Zheng, CFM, Chief, Floodplain Management

Staci Parent, CFM, Floodplain Mapping Specialist

A great deal has happened since our 2008 newsletter, and the Floodplain Management Section expects to be very busy in the coming months.

First, DNR has applied for funding from FEMA to prepare county-wide digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs) for three more counties: Dawes, Colfax and the part of Lancaster that only has approximate zone maps. In addition, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development has awarded DNR a Community Development Block Grant to map five counties to the work-map level. Those counties are Adams, Hamilton,

Jefferson, Seward and York. We are planning to use LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data to develop these maps. As soon as the LiDAR elevation data become available, DNR will initiate the mapping process.

We are also pleased to report that another four Nebraska counties have received their DFIRMs from FEMA in 2009. Those counties are Lincoln (Jan. 2), Red Willow (Feb. 4), Harlan (Feb. 18), and Furnas (March 2). These new counties bring the total of effective county-wide DFIRMs to 41.

Breaking the Cycle: *Flood Mitigation Update*

Steve McMaster, CFM, Natural Resources Planner-Coordinator

Mitigation Planning: As a result of the “New Year’s Ice Storm” federal disaster declaration in January 2007, Nebraska received a large pot of money to complete all-hazards mitigation plans. The priority has been to complete plans for counties and natural resources districts, and many have been completed or are currently in-process. When these planning activities conclude, Nebraska will have the vast majority of counties covered under a mitigation plan. Having an approved mitigation plan will make the communities and counties participating in the planning eligible for FEMA mitigation project funding.

Mitigation Grant Programs: For the first time, all five FEMA mitigation grant programs will be covered under one guidance. Called “Unified Hazard Mitigation Assistance” (or Unified HMA), this process has streamlined the approximately 80 percent of guidance that was common among all five programs. The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency administers the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program. The NDNR administers the other three flood-only grant programs: Flood Mitigation Assistance, Repetitive Flood Claims and Severe Repetitive Loss. All three programs receive annual allocations from Congress. The Flood Mitigation Assistance program receives planning and project grants, Repetitive Flood Claims targets “repetitive loss” properties currently with buyouts only, and Severe Repetitive Loss targets properties that have experienced extremely high flood insurance claims which drain the National Flood Insurance Fund. In comparison to other states, Nebraska does not have many repetitive loss or severe repetitive loss properties, but Flood Mitigation Assistance funding is consistent and useful for a wide range of flood-loss-reduction techniques.

For more information about these flood mitigation programs and repetitive loss, call Steve McMaster at 402.471.3957.



Bill Jones
Floodplain Management Specialist

Ask Bill... Floodplain Q&A

Q. What’s new on the new Elevation Certificate? How is it different from the old certificate?

A. FEMA issued a revised Elevation Certificate effective March 31, 2009. Continued use of the older certificate, which expired on March 31, 2009, is allowed for one year. Use of the new certificate, however, is preferred. The most significant changes are found in Sections A, C and their guidance. In Sections A8(d) and A9(d), check boxes have been added to note “engineered” openings in foundation walls for buildings and attached garages. When hardware approved by the International Code Council Evaluation Service or engineered openings certified by a registered professional engineer have been incorporated, their use can be noted here. This will ensure that insurance agents and floodplain managers are aware that the openings have been approved. Floodplain managers must maintain this documentation with the Elevation Certificate in their records.

In the Building Information Section, C2(h), surveyors are now provided a location to note the elevation of deck, stair and supports for structural supports that are not located adjacent to the building. If these are located at elevations lower than the Lowest Adjacent Grade next to the building, they may impact flood zone determinations or requests for removal of structures from the mandatory purchase requirement for flood insurance (Letters of Map Amendment or Letter of Map Revision Based on Fill). Guidance has been changed to address these new changes, and an additional building diagram has been added for “stem wall” elevated slab construction.



Staci Parent, CFM

NDNR’s Parent Earns CFM Designation

Staci Parent, the Floodplain Management Section’s Mapping Specialist, earned the Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) designation recently after passing the Association of State Floodplain Managers’ CFM exam. “Preparing for the exam allows one to see many facets of floodplain management in an organized fashion,” Parent said. “I found this comprehensive view especially valuable. I recommend the program for anyone working in the field, but it would be especially helpful for Floodplain Managers.” If you are interested in taking this exam, please call or e-mail Bill Jones (bill.jones@nebraska.gov, 402.471.3932) who will provide the training materials, and schedule and proctor an exam.

Make Sure We Have Your Latest Information So We Can Send You Our Latest Information



Has your address or phone extension changed? Does your community have a new Floodplain Administrator? If so, go to the Floodplain Management website:

<http://dnr.ne.gov/floodplain/floodplain.html> and click on “Instant Floodplain Administrator Change Form.” Simply

fill in the blanks and click “Send.” Your updated information will come straight to us, and we will immediately change our databases. This will save time and postage, and you will avoid delays in receiving our latest announcements and messages. Thanks!



The Blizzard of 1949

This year marks the 60th anniversary of a winter storm Nebraskans remember as the “Blizzard of ’49.” Farmers had enjoyed a warm September and October, and brought in an outstanding harvest of corn, wheat and soybeans. But on Nov. 18, 1948, all that changed when the first severe winter storm swept in with heavy snow, sleet and winds of 50 to 70 mph. Northeastern Nebraska received the worst of this first round of weather with Bloomfield and Hartington registering 24 inches of snow, and Wausa receiving 30 inches. More than 1,700 telephone poles were downed.

After a brief warming period in late December, a light rain soon turned to snow on Jan. 1, 1949. By evening, snow began to fall heavily and soon there were 12 inches on the ground. Snow drifts were already piling up on highways. The storm raged for three full days across western, central and northern Nebraska. Winds of 50 to 60 mph drove heavy snow on top of what had already fallen since November. On Jan. 5, the Omaha World Herald noted, “Snowplows were in action over Nebraska early Wednesday and the wheels of transportation were beginning to turn in some areas as the blizzard let up.”

But the severe winter did not end after the January blizzard. Cold and snowy weather continued into March when another major snowfall dropped 20 inches of snow around North Platte. The Big and Little Nemaha Rivers flooded because of ice jams. Then, on April 14, the last big storm hit south-central and eastern Nebraska depositing 12 inches of snow. During the winter of 1948-49, parts of the state received more than 100 inches of snow. The Wausa-Bloomfield area received a total of 90 inches. One area in Antelope County had drifts that reached over 35 feet and didn’t melt until June.

The Blizzard of 1949 impacted an area larger than 193,000 square miles over four states. It left nearly a quarter of a million people trapped and millions of heads of livestock without access to food and water. Helping with the rescue of both people and animals were the newly formed Military Air Transport Service, the 5th Army, the American Red Cross, the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Guard and the Civil Air Patrol. Operation Haylift (U.S. Air Force) and Operation Snowbound (U.S. Army) were formed in late January to address the immense need.



Chicago & Northwestern tracks near Harrison, Neb. The blizzard of ’49 closed every north-south rail line and all but one east-west line in Nebraska. Photo courtesy of NET.



During the blizzard, light planes were often the only way to reach many rural areas in Nebraska and surrounding states. NSHS.

(To read Steve’s entire story with additional photos, please go to <http://dnr.ne.gov/floodplain/floodplain.html>. Click on “Flood Mitigation” along the top in the red bar, then click on “FSI: Flood Scene Investigation: Blizzard of 1949 and Its Aftermath.”)



For More Information

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